

## Narrative report

**Subject: Implementation of the concept of Age Friendly Community (CPV)**  
**Period: January-December 2021**

**Objective: The social inclusion of older people in the target communities is increased**

The CPV concept continues to be implemented in Făleşti and Edineț districts. The results achieved so far vary from one district to another, given that the openness and commitment of district leaders have varied. The administration of Făleşti district was more open to cooperation than that of Edineț. The president of the Edineț district council postponed the creation of the District Coordinating Committee (CCR) for many months. Finally, the JRC was established at the end of 2021.

During 2020–2021, the project supported 34 communities in Făleşti and Edineț district to become more age-friendly, by assessing the needs of the elderly based on the methodological tool developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). Thirty-six coordinating committees (34 local and 2 district) have been consolidated so far to support the implementation of the CPV concept. The graphic representation of the targeted communities can be seen in figure 1.

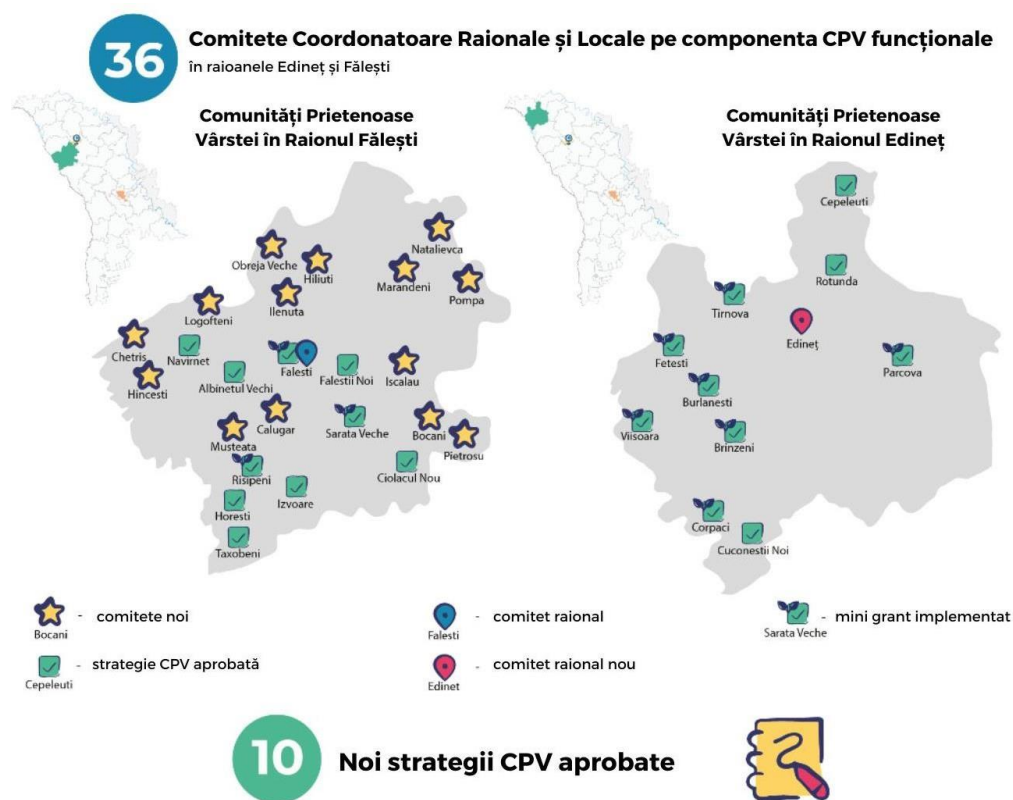


Figure 1. Geographical representation of the localities, CCL and CCR

Both the CCLs and the CCRs are functional, guided in their work by the Methodological Guide on the CPV concept and the framework regulation. Committee members, being involved voluntarily, know and successfully apply their skills to implement Age Friendly Strategies.

According to the authorities, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Family Protection (DGASPF) Făleşti, the implementation process of the CPV concept brought a positive dynamic in the change

people's mentality, people in the communities have become more active, more interested, with the desire to change positively so that the elderly have good living conditions and a decent life. Thus, the district authorities of Făleşti came up with the initiative to form a group of local facilitators, in order to later get involved in population consultation processes regarding the existing problems. A further 20 facilitators were therefore trained to assess the needs of older people. All trained facilitators applied the theoretical knowledge in practice and moderated at least 4 focus groups in their localities. The authorities greatly appreciated the involvement of the facilitators, who managed to organize a participatory process, managing to convince people to express their challenges, grievances and propose solutions. The results of the focus groups and questionnaires are to be used for the development of the new strategy of Făleşti district for 2021–2025, which is in process.

In the new target communities, people's activism has increased and the perception of aging and involvement in social life has changed. According to Mr. Liviu Cibotaraș, the mayor of Brînzeni village, Edinet district, *"Things started to move differently, in a proper way, when the GI and the local Coordinating Committee (CCL) were established. Even though they were recently established, they brought many ideas and support to the APL, enjoying the trust of the citizens. There are still people who criticize the change or the mayor, but they have always been there, while CCL members and GIs are highly regarded for their dedication and volunteer work. The people of the village changed, they started to get more involved. Of course, there is still work to do, because it is hard to reshape people, but now I have strong allies to take on for change."*

More than 210 training sessions and workshops were held in 2021 for members of the Coordinating Committees and other key community actors. More details can be found in Figure 2.

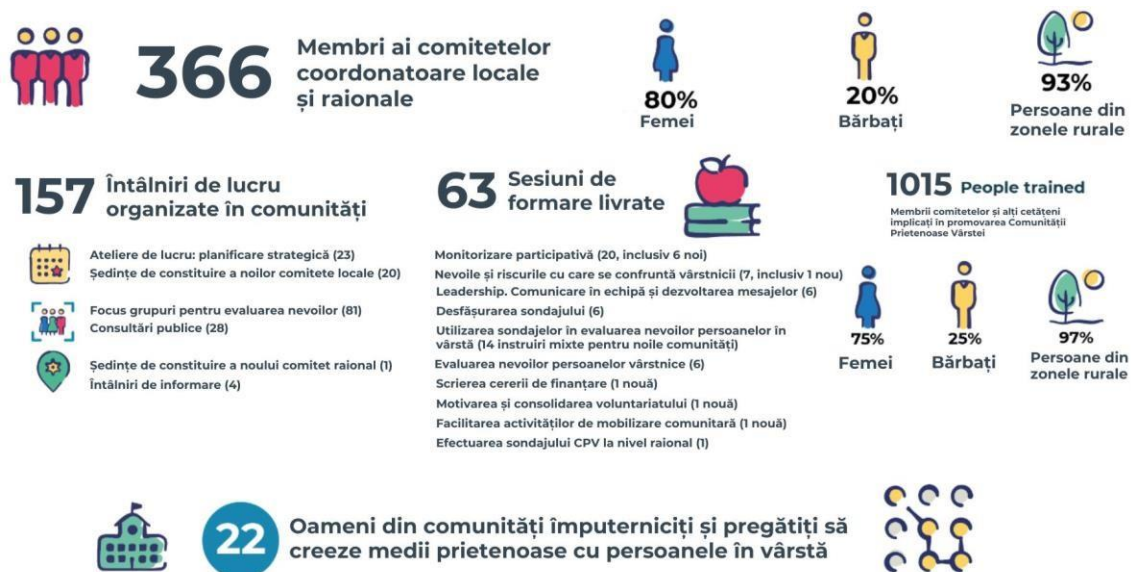


Figure 2. The number of trainings and the number of participants on the CPV component

According to the opinions collected as a result of the training sessions, workshops and meetings, CC members learned to organize themselves better, share tasks, come up with proposals and make unambiguous decisions, ask for help when they cannot find solutions independently, consult other community actors, mobilize people and act as leaders. And it is these skills that will help them achieve the goals set out in the developed CPV Strategies.

The CPV action plans developed by the target communities for 2021 were implemented by an average of 66%. The highest percentage –81% was achieved by the village of Brînzeni, and the lowest – 50% by the village of Tîrnova. Austere local budgets, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and

the limitations imposed by the pandemic were among the causes that limited the full realization of the actions planned by the APL.

This initiative produced significant changes: (i) key people in the communities (APL representatives, LSCs) improved their skills in project writing and implementation, which provides more opportunities for future fundraising. Mrs. Ludmila Golovatic, president of the LSC from Sărata Veche mentioned: "If we don't know how to put our ideas on paper, we can't benefit from any financial support to make these changes"; (ii) community members became aware of the benefits of joint cooperation for community development. According to Mr. Ion Pirojoc, LSC member from Vișoara, "The greatest success is not that we now have a clean and well-equipped sports field, but that the villagers were actively involved in the implementation of this project, united and worked for a common purpose"; (iii) decent waiting conditions for public transport were created and the risk of exposure to accidents was reduced; (iv) increased opportunities for older people to meet in safer and more comfortable spaces and to exercise; (v) Local authorities and key community stakeholders are better able to identify the vulnerabilities of older people and respond more promptly. Following the competition, ten initiatives (mini grants) were approved by the grant awarding committee. The proposed initiatives concerned the creation/arrangement of leisure and sports spaces (parks, centers for the elderly, gyms), waiting stations for public transport, the installation of benches in the park, facilitating the access of the elderly or disabled to public institutions.

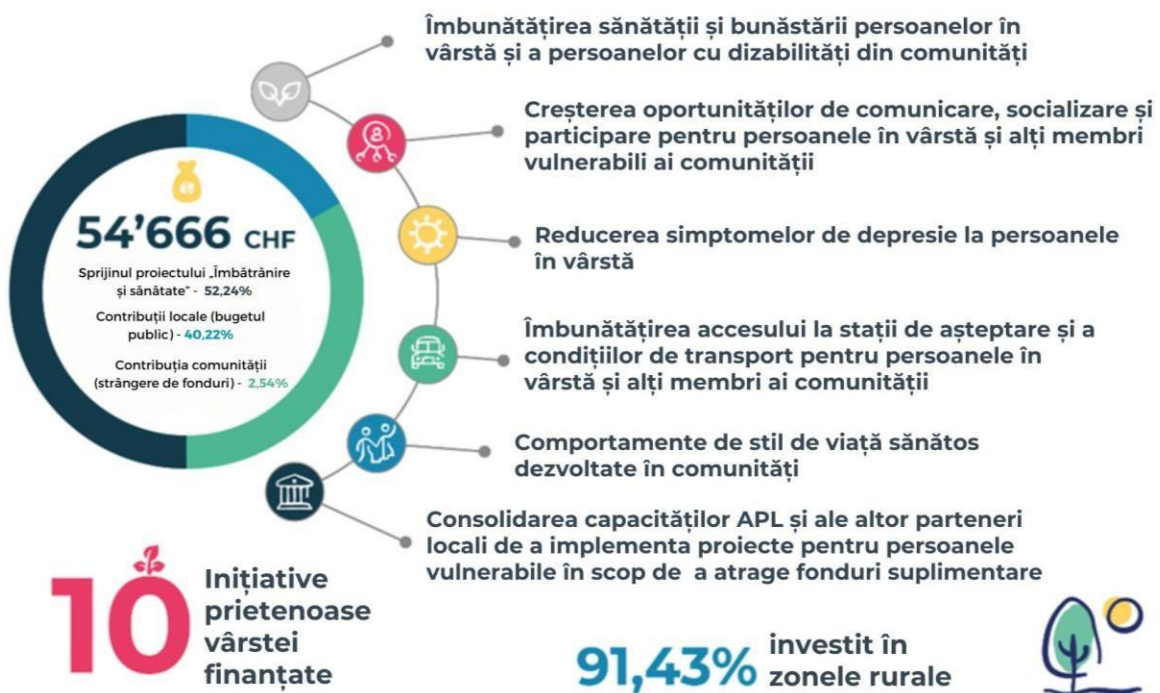


Figure 3. Representation of age-friendly initiatives (mini grants)

The total budget for mini grants was 933959.71 MDL, of which 57.24% was covered by the project, 40.22% of the costs were covered by APL and 2.54% by the community through donations.

Making mini-grants not only strengthened communication and cooperation at the local level between LPAs, GIs and CCLs, but also generated certain improvements for people in the community, especially for the elderly, such as:

- more bus stops and decent waiting conditions for public transport, reduced the risk of exposure to accidents and illness, especially for the elderly and those with disabilities in Parcovă and Burlănești;

- better conditions and more opportunities were created for the elderly to meet and carry out activities in Fetești, Sărata Veche and Fălești, with a space intended for the elderly being set up;
- better conditions were created for the practice of sports and outdoor activities for the elderly and children in Corpaci, Tîrnova and Viișoara;
- increased access to public institutions in Risipeni and Brînzești, ramps being installed.

Mrs. Bogdan Galina, from Sărata Veche mentioned: "All my life I have been involved in activities both at school and in the community. Since I retired I have become less active, because of my living situation I am practically left alone and isolated, but since our center for the elderly opened, I have a hope in life, it is a place where I can meet people of my age my, we can communicate. I worked as a technology education teacher at the local school, I know how to crochet, knit, embroider, and here at the center we set out together with other ladies to start embroidering a Moldovan national costume. I find it interesting to come and talk to other seniors, thanks CASMED for bringing us back to life."

The Friendly Committees Platform was created with the aim of creating a unique space for socialization, interaction and exchange of experience for all localities that implement the CPV concept. This initiative was beneficial because the localities increased the visibility of their community actions, encouraged the competitive spirit, facilitated the adoption of good practices.

### **Grandma and Grandmother Fest 2021**

In order not to endanger the elderly, it was decided to organize the Bunica si Bunelul 2021 festival in online format. Thus, the schedule and agenda were adjusted accordingly.

*"It was an unusual edition, full of challenges, but also opportunities. Of course, we remember with nostalgia the first 3 editions of the festival, when, for one day, the city of Balti became the capital of happy seniors. But this online edition exceeded all expectations. So many interesting materials were published online, and they were viewed, enjoyed, appreciated by thousands and thousands of people of different ages, far from the borders of our localities, even far from the borders of the country". - Galina Spătaru*

The event was organized in partnership with the National Network of Seniors, between September 13-19. By August 15, more than 190 participants from 20 initiative groups (IGs) submitted all materials, including videos, pictures, video sequences prepared for the festival. By September 10, all materials (both from the participants and those created by the CASMED team) were collected, checked, technically adjusted and prepared to be posted on the festival page.

During a whole week, from Monday to Saturday, various contents were uploaded on the Festival's Facebook page, and on Sunday there was

totalization event. As a first experience of running an online event, a well-known event organizer was hired to provide guidance and support at all stages. Thus, I understood how online events work, what are the key aspects of visibility and promotion, as well as the technical aspects. At the same time, I received good input and advice for content development. At the initiative of the members of the Network, the Festival Anthem was created and performed during the event.

During the preparation stage, IGs pre-filmed short videos promoting their talents, occupations and products. A video spot about the Festival lasting 30-45 seconds was produced and promoted on Facebook and CASMED web pages and through media partners. To ensure better visibility of the festival, two dolls/mascots representing a grandmother and a boy (2.5 m high) were involved in the pre-event promotion activities. A total of 45 Grandmother and Bunelul Fest 2021 statuettes were made and later distributed to the participants.

The photo exhibition with 14 inspirational stories of the elderly was prepared and shared. Five health video capsules on topics such as beauty, healthy eating, mental health, sexual health and sports were recorded and later distributed during the festival. The event in the program also included the collection of old ballads

performed by the seniors and an exhibition of vegetables and fruits in a giant or funny shape from the seniors' garden (pumpkins, raspberries, potatoes, tomatoes, carrots).

Two contests "Silver Haired Dancers" and "Miss Grandma & Mister Bunelul Fest" were launched, bringing together more than 24 contestants (GI members and senior pairs), which raised the spirits of both contestants and fans, who voted for the winners through a given like. Thus, the members of the GI "Virsta de Argint" from the village of Cajba, Glodeni district were designated winners of the dance competition and Olga and Eugen Dubeț from the village of Bălatina, Glodeni district were designated Miss Bunica & Mister Bunelul Fest 2021.

The totalizing event of the "Bunica si Bunelul Fest 2021" festival, lasting 2 hours, was organized on September 19, 2021 on the Zoom platform. The event was broadcast live on Facebook and on TV Nord. The live event was moderated by a presenter, supported by two puppet mascots and the CASMED team.

The event was attended by over 120 seniors from 20 GIs, as well as guests, representatives of the diaspora, as well as representatives of the mayor's offices. The event broadcast on Facebook has accumulated over 2900 views. The festival's Facebook page has garnered over 5,900 followers and over 2,800 likes, reaching 274,619 people and 25,096 post interactions.

All participants of the event "Bunica si Bunelul Fest" received diplomas and gifts (promotional materials – t-shirts, bags, cups, etc. with the logo of the festival. The opinions of the participants, suggestions and lessons learned were collected and will be taken into consideration for the next events.

Some difficulties were encountered in the process of organizing the Festival, but they were successfully overcome. For example, it was necessary to adjust the festival agenda and transfer this activity from offline to online due to the poor epidemiological situation. The seniors did not have digital skills or knowledge of how to make videos and short presentations and access online communication platforms, respectively, it was necessary to build them in a limited time. Thus, they were guided and trained by the CASMED team, volunteers and other community actors, in workshops and meetings, to be able to deliver video content for the competitions.

The expenses for the organization of the capacity of the Network and the Bunica si Bunelul 2021 event were co-financed by the Austrian Embassy in Chisinau. The activities carried out during the reporting period were reflected in the mass media.

### **Conclusions and perspectives**

The pandemic has affected people's health, both physically and emotionally. Several CC and GI members have gone through the traumatic experience of COVID. Despite the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by it, they were quite optimistic and kept communication, interaction and activity. In many cases, meetings were held with smaller numbers of people to minimize the risk of contamination.

Substantial increases since the beginning of the year for building materials and fuel have created obstacles and continue to be a challenge for the implementation of age-friendly initiatives (mini grants) and CPV strategies. LPAs have major budget constraints due to the drastic reduction in taxes paid by small businesses in localities, which has been affected by the pandemic, and the gas crisis has further exacerbated these constraints.

Cooperation with district authorities proceeded at different speeds, especially in Edineț district, which was more reluctant to any new initiatives, compared to APL, which are thirsty for change and implementation of new initiatives.

After two years of increased political and economic instability, Moldova has a chance to return to the path of reforms after the recently held early elections. Stability at the central level could reduce political tensions and power struggles. Policy makers could be more open to development at higher speeds and put the interests of citizens ahead of their personal or party interests.



Reference to sources:

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4. <https://shorturl.at/CDHK2>
5. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/960971721132001>